



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS  
FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
<http://latchildrenscommission.org>**

**Monday, September 21, 2015**

**10:00 AM**

AUDIO FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (15-4543)

**Attachments:** [AUDIO](#)

Present: Commissioner Geneva Berger, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Commissioner Sunny Kang, Commissioner John Kim, Commissioner Jacquelyn McCroskey, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Commissioner Wendy B. Smith, Commissioner Janet Teague, Vice Chair Carol O. Biondi and Vice Chair Sydney Kamlager

Absent: Commissioner Candace Cooper and Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Call to Order. (15-3963)

**The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Biondi at 10:08 a.m.**

2. Introductions of the September 21, 2015 meeting attendees. (15-3964)

**Self-introductions were made.**

3. Approval of the September 21, 2015 meeting agenda. (15-3965)

**On motion of Commissioner Seipel, seconded by Commissioner Smith, (Commissioners Cooper and Konigar-Macklin being absent), this item was approved.**

4. Approval of the minutes from the meeting of August 3, 2015. (15-3966)

**On motion of Vice Chair Kamlager, seconded by Commissioner Smith, (Commissioners Cooper and Konigar-Macklin being absent), this item was approved.**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

## **II. REPORTS**

5. Vice Chair's report for September 21, 2015. (15-3967)

**Vice Chair Biondi reported the following:**

- **Introduced and welcomed new Commissioner Janet Teague of the 4th Supervisorial District;**
- **Recognized and expressed their appreciation of Executive Office staff Justin Ong and Ivonne Umana;**
- **On September 15, 2015, the Board approved a motion introduced by Supervisors Solis and Kuehl recommending the establishment of an interagency workgroup to implement the recommendations of the Juvenile Probation Outcomes Study released in April 2015. Commissioner McCroskey was appointed as the representative for the Commission for Children and Families with Commissioner Biondi serving as the alternate;**
- **In the absence of Commissioner Cooper, Commissioner Kamlager will serve as the Elections Chair for the 2015-16 Election of Officers;**
- **Newly elected officers will preside the next meeting scheduled for October 5, 2015; and**
- **There is no Executive Director's update today.**

**By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Cooper and Konigar-Macklin being absent), the Commission accepted Vice Chair Biondi's report.**

6. Executive Director update on Commission activities. (15-4192)

**There was no update presented.**

7. Department of Children and Family Services Director's Report for September 21, 2015 by Philip Browning, Director. (15-3968)

**Director Philip Browning reported on the following:**

- **Introduced his new Executive Assistant Daniel Svedas;**
- **Pleased that Commissioner Janet Teague joined the Commission, her family has supported foster youth in the South Bay area;**
- **There are over 1,000 new hires which will be placed in immersion offices; San Fernando Valley and Compton were identified and given special consideration for additional staffing and resources from the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Mental Health (DMH);**
- **DCFS caseloads have decreased however, they are still considered too high to do good social work; this continues to be brought to their attention by the Katie A. Panel;**
- **AB403 - Continuum of Care Reform is anticipated to pass in the Assembly and will be a challenge to all Counties in California. Upon approval, DCFS will collaborate with other departments for resources;**
- **There is a need foster homes and emergency placements. In the past, it was not so difficult to recruit foster/adoptive parents; however, in present time, there is a real trepidation about becoming a foster or adoptive parent;**
- **DCFS held their Grand Opening of their new training center on Hill Street. The DCFS University is a state of the art 25,000 square foot training facility that is equipped with computer labs, class rooms, and simulation labs. DCFS partnered with USC and UCLA to provide a better training opportunity for new staff.**

**By Common Consent, there being no objection (Commissioners Cooper and Konigar-Macklin being absent), the Commission accepted Director Browning's report.**

### **III. DISCUSSIONS/APPROVALS**

8. Discussion and approval on the number of Vice Chairs for the 2015-16 Election of Officers. (15-4005)

**Commissioner Biondi introduced this item and presented the matter for discussion.**

**Commissioner Curry shared her past experience as Chair and having to work with three Vice Chairs. The idea of having three Vice Chairs was intended for the purpose of mentoring new Commissioners. It was a tremendous amount of work keeping all three Vice Chairs up to date and at the end of the year, of the three Vice Chairs, neither ran for Chair with the same results the following year. Commissioner Curry proposed having two Vice Chairs.**

**Commissioner Kang indicated that he was one of the three Vice Chairs during that term; and at that time, the Commission did not have an Executive Director.**

**Commissioner Garen commented that in the broader context of governance, an Executive Committee should be considered consistent with the Commission bylaws; the Executive Committee would be kept well informed, cohesive, and strategic. Commissioner Curry indicated that a decision to appoint an Executive Committee would be at the discretion of the newly appointed Chair.**

**Commissioner Berger commented that since the Commission currently has an Executive Director; it may be a good idea to have three Vice Chairs. The experience would assist Commissioners considering the position of Chair and allows the Vice Chairs an opportunity to understand the level of involvement required.**

**Commissioner Kang agreed that an Executive Committee would be useful and two Vice Chairs would be sufficient.**

**On motion of Commissioner Curry, seconded by Vice Chair Biondi, (Commissioners Cooper and Konigar-Macklin being absent), the Commission approved the appointment of two Vice Chairs for the 2015-16 Election of Officers.**

**9. Presentation of the 2015-16 Commission Nomination Slate and Election of Officers:**

- Commissioner Candace Cooper, Elections Chair (15-3970)

**Vice Chair Kamlager introduced this item and presented the candidates for the 2015-16 Election of Officers:**

- **Nominees for Chair: Commissioner Kang**
- **Nominees for Vice Chair: Commissioners Garen, Kang, McCroskey and Smith**

**Vice Chair Kamlager open nominations from the floor, there being no further nominations; Commissioner Kang was removed from the Slate for Vice Chair. All Candidates were invited to speak on their nominations.**

**Commissioner Kang waived his opportunity to speak.**

**Commissioner Garen, nominee for Vice Chair, stated that she is looking forward to helping the Commission think about its mission, vision, values and about the governance and what strategic focus the Commission wants. Additionally, it is important for the Commission to focus on getting measureable outcomes for its work.**

**Commissioner McCroskey, nominee for Vice Chair, stated that there is a lot of work to do and there are many opportunities for different kinds of involvement. She is thrilled to have an opportunity to serve on the Commission and happy to be part of the leadership team.**

**Commissioner Smith, nominee for Vice Chair, stated that she is privileged to be a member of the Commission and to have an opportunity to have an impact on the future of children in Los Angeles County. She would like to serve at whatever capacity her knowledge and abilities can best help the Commission do its work.**

**After discussion, by Common Consent, there being no objection, the Commission approved the 2015-16 Slate of Officers by the following vote:**

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**Ayes:** 13 - Commissioner Genevra Berger, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Chair Sunny Kang, Commissioner John Kim, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith, Commissioner Janet Teague, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi and Commissioner Sydney Kamlager

**Absent:** 2 - Commissioner Candace Cooper and Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin

**At this time, Commissioners submitted their ballots and the item was tabled for later in the meeting for a report on the tabulation of the ballots.**

**Later in the meeting, after the tabulation of ballots for Chair and Vice Chair, Vice Chair Kamlager reported that Commissioner Kang was elected Chair and Commissioners McCroskey and Smith were elected Vice Chairs for the 2015-16 term of office.**

**Therefore, on motion of commissioner Seipel, seconded by Commissioner Kim, duly carried by the following vote, the Commission approved the 2015 16 Election of Officers:**

**Ayes:** 13 - Commissioner Genevra Berger, Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Commissioner Wendy Garen, Chair Sunny Kang, Commissioner John Kim, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith, Commissioner Janet Teague, Commissioner Carol O. Biondi and Commissioner Sydney Kamlager

**Absent:** 2 - Commissioner Candace Cooper and Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin

- 10.** Discussion and approval of the Commission for Children and Families' Ad Hoc Welcome Centers Committee Draft Report. (15-3971)

**Commissioner Seipel introduced this item and reported that the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors and County Counsel have reviewed and provided input in this report before the final draft was completed.**

**Commissioner Smith presented the attached PowerPoint presentation and addressed the following:**

- Important to note that this is not an academic work or research document; it is the work of a committee that shares the concerns of the Los Angeles child welfare community at large. The hope is to underscore the urgent need for transformation of the way we take children into care.
- First thing to note is the number of infant children and youth taken into the Centers has risen alarmingly over the first six months. From January to June, there were a total of 3,680 entries. Some may be repeat entries of the same child or youth, but in any case, still a high number.
- Total entries rose 40% from January to June, 26% increase in 2nd quarter over the 1st.
- Over the course of January – June 2015, the entries of children between the ages of 0-2 rose by approximately 71%. The rise of repeat entries of adolescents between the ages of 14-18 increased in the second quarter over the first quarter by 41%;

Additional data from the PowerPoint presentation was discussed.

- There are some changes taking place in conditions and requirements in the state that presents opportunity to make changes:
  - o The settlement agreement requirement to have Welcome Centers seek licensure as 72 hour transitional shelter facilities;
  - o The Continuum Care Reform with a vision to deviate from congregate care and centralized shelters in the state;
  - o Core Practice Model (CPM) that emphasizes plans for children and youth should be family centered; be individually tailored; and addresses the underlying needs of the child or youth;
- The Children's Welcome Center (CWC) houses children ages 0 - 11 with the greater majority being new detentions. In the first six months, over half of the total entries to CWC were under 5 years old.
- Adverse childhood experiences have a powerful effect on the child's brain development and psychosocial development. Multiple placements have an increasing negative effect from the neurobiological level outward and on the developing stress response system in small children. Similarly, it has negative effects in terms of higher incidents of involvement with the law, eventual reliance on public assistance, and homelessness. Research suggest that systems, not just a child's behavior, play a role with "hard to place" children.

- The support given to potential foster caregivers and children or youth with mental health issues in advance to placement and during placement is going to be critical for successful and one time placement.
- Key problems are identified as not enough foster placements that can specifically respond to the children who need them, the needs of babies and young children, children with serious mental health problems, and the need for emergency shelters.

Obstacles in recruiting foster care givers and retaining the ones in place for young children were identified as follows:

- o Visitation requirements;
- o Lack of quality childcare for the working foster caregiver; and
- o Prohibited costs for some foster parents including cost associated with accepting infants and very young children.

Obstacles in recruiting and retaining foster care givers for older youth were identified as follows:

- o Lack of support and preparation before and during placement of youth with serious mental health problems; and
- o Lack of sufficient intensive treatment foster care homes.
- In the Youth Welcome Center (YWC), 85% of youth between the ages of 14-18 are re-placements.
- The number of foster care homes has decreased while there is an increase in the foster care population. The increasing problem needs to involve many stakeholders and solutions because early childhood and adolescence are critical times for brain development.

Commissioner Curry addressed the following portion of the PowerPoint presentation:

- The danger of this crisis is that there is an increase in numbers of babies and young children entering the Welcome Center, and increase in repeat entries of adolescent;
- Commissioner Curry reiterated key data discussed by Commissioner Smith;



- The increase of young children under the age of two entering the foster care system and the decreasing number of foster care beds, results in more children ending up at the CWCs;
- This crisis presents an opportunity to improve child welfare and youth outcomes through the litigation that the County is undergoing with the State, the legislation that is being passed at the State level, and the mandate for the CPM to be implemented;
- The mandates provide the opportunity to put together a plan that will be beneficial to the children; the vision of that State and County have to be considered when developing a plan to be consistent with mandates; and
- The Committee designed different recommendations for different age groups to ensure all the children's needs are met.

The Committee recommends the following for the CWC:

- o Develop plan for aggressive recruitment of foster homes for babies and young children;
- o Convene groups to analyze needs of very young children and develop more robust supports; and
- o Develop a public private task force to develop solutions for key recruitment obstacles cited in the report. The three major obstacles identified as the need for child care, costs associated with caring for very young children, and logistics in meeting visitation requirements.

The Committee recommends the following for the YWC:

- o Develop a decentralized network of community based emergency shelters using exiting group home so that if the youth is removed from a placement, they can stay within their community, continue to go to school, and be near their families;
- o Start pilot program that includes a Crisis Team with their main role being to contact and work with the social worker, contact the Family Team (put together by the CPM), and talk to providers and youth to determine how placement was failed;
- o Identify a point person that will know exactly how many emergency group home beds are opened every day and what kind of youth the homes are able to take in on a particular day to ensure they maximize usage of available beds; and
- o Intensive recruitment for foster homes, treatment foster homes, and placements for adolescents.

- In 2008 – there were 8,641 out of home care youth and 6,091 foster homes.
- In 2015 - there are 8,745 out of home care youth and 3,863 foster homes.

Commissioner Curry concluded that Los Angeles county needs to look at County's efforts to recruit through departments and FFAs and see if any recommendations made in a report released by UCLA Resource Family Recruitment will help increase foster beds. Additionally, there needs to be a continuum of care and work needs to be started immediately and it would need help and support from public and private partners.

Commissioner Garen asked for the percentage of the 3,700 children that went through the Welcome Center in comparison to the children removed from home and how many intensive treatment foster care homes are there.

Director Browning confirmed that the biggest challenge is finding immediate placement of the children removed from their homes. Over 50% of the children are unable to be placed immediately. There are about 90 to 100 intensive treatment foster care homes and DCFS is working to increase the amount. Director Browning added that the payment rate for these types of homes is too low and they are working with the State to increase the rate.

Commissioner Teague asked if the foster parents are given the same rates in 2008 versus 2015.

Director Browning confirmed that foster parents are given a 2% increase each year.

Commissioner Kang asked how the dropping of foster family coincides with dual certification.

Director Browning confirmed that they will need psychosocial and there would not be the need for two sets of fingerprints since there will only be one way of doing business.

Commissioner Kim asked if there have been any conversations with potential contractors that will be part of the network of emergency shelter cares and their ability of taking on additional youths.

Commissioner Smith advised that the report indicates recommendations and have not been implemented.

Commissioner Brenes posed a question regarding the costly transformation and the cost to implement the reported alternatives.

Commissioner Smith stated that the cost for the transformation is unknown at this time however, there are certain requirements that will need to be met such as construction, separate bathrooms, dormitories, and outfitting the CWC to make it a place where children and youth can stay comfortably for three days if needed.

Commissioner Curry added that some CWCs require separate playground areas and facilities for new detainees and re-placed children in cases when they have to be kept separately. Also, 72 hour facilities may need additional staff and it can be costly.

Member of the Public, Ivy Lewis Carey, Children's Law Center, addressed the Commission regarding court visitation guidelines and implementation/utilization of the CPM.

Director Browning responded to the public comment and stated that the CPM is aggressively being pursued with over 300 staff that are certified, resources certification, and working with consultants to implement CPM.

On motion of Commissioner Seipel, seconded by Commissioner Berger, and duly carried by the following vote, the Ad Hoc Welcome Centers Committee Report was approved to be presented to the Board of Supervisors:

**Ayes:** 9 - Commissioner Geneva Berger, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Ann E. Franzen, Chair Sunny Kang, Vice Chair Jacquelyn McCroskey, Commissioner Liz Seipel, Vice Chair Wendy B. Smith, Commissioner Janet Teague and Commissioner Carol O. Biondi

**Noes:** 1 - Commissioner John Kim

**Abstentions:** 3 - Commissioner Maria Brenes, Commissioner Wendy Garen and Commissioner Sydney Kamlager

**Absent:** 2 - Commissioner Candace Cooper and Commissioner Adrienne Konigar-Macklin

Attachments:     [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT  
PRESENTATION](#)

#### **IV. PRESENTATION**

**11. Publicly Funded Early Care and Education:**

- Genie Chough, Children's Deputy, Third Supervisorial District
- Michelle Vega, Deputy, Fifth Supervisorial District
- Richard Cohen, Director of Project ABC (15-4410)

**Commissioner McCroskey introduced the panel of presenters and provided a brief over view on the complex issues with access to child care. Commissioner McCroskey indicated that she has several years of experience working on issues to address child care and believes that the underlying issue is the lack of communication between the Child Care and Child Welfare entities.**

**Genie Chough, Children's Deputy, Third District, welcomed the new Executive Director Tamara Hunter, thanked the Commission and acknowledged Richard Cohen and Commissioner McCroskey for all their hard work, support and dedication. Ms. Chough reported on the following:**

- **Provided an overview of their work in identifying the number one issue as the lack of foster families and relative caregivers;**
- **Cal. Educ. Code §8263 clearly expresses two areas of eligibility and priority for state subsidized child care and development services, one being children who are at risk of neglect or abuse and two being children who receive child protective services;**
- **A major factor is the interpretation of the law by education consultants, early education community advocates, the belief is that once a child is detained they are no longer at risk of abuse and will no longer need child protective services, and the lack of availability for child care slots; and**

- A stakeholder meeting was held in Sacramento where language was drafted for a bill to clarify the interpretation issue; however, after many revisions the bill was not a suitable version to move forward, and was ultimately pulled. In the process, the problem identified was that child care advocates and child welfare advocates are not communicating.

Richard Cohen, Director of Project ABC, added the following:

- Early care and education are key to the prevention of future abuse; and
- A child care facility for foster children was available; however, foster children were unable to be placed due to indictments and the lack of collaboration with child welfare advocates; and
- Identified the early education community to be deeply committed to their mission of ensuring that child care is accessible to working families; however, the child welfare system and process is not understood
- Expressed the need for a legislative agenda to address the need for child care services

Michelle Vega, Children's and Social Services Deputy, Fifth District, added the following:

- Provided a brief overview on Supervisor Antonovich's involvement as the Mayor of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors and Chair of First 5 LA;
- Addressed the importance for collaboration among child care and welfare advocates, the Board of Supervisors and First 5 LA;
- Asked Commissioner Curry to express her support on this topic at the First 5 LA Board meeting.

Commissioner McCroskey asked the Commission to be more actively involved in bridging communication between the child welfare and early education communities.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Genie Chough responded as follows:

- The child care community would like needs and income requirements included in the new law; however, the child welfare community wants categorical eligibility for kids in foster care. There is an impasse; and

- **The next step of action is the possibility of increasing availability to the child care alternate payment program; to increase slots. This is a political fix; however, it does not solve the issue; and**
- **Child Care Alliance group has been consulted and is in support of Child Welfare's decision; and**
- **Costs associated with increasing the child care alternate payment program have not been determined**

**Commissioner Kim referenced the need to consider both positions, including the real issue of scarcity for the Child care community.**

**The presenters added the following final remarks:**

- **Mr. Cohen asked to include the Department of Mental Health as a collaborating entity;**
- **Ms. Vega added the importance of providing child care for working foster families; and**
- **Ms. Chough asked the issue to be included in the Commission's Legislative agenda and requested a letter of support.**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

#### **V. MISCELLANEOUS**

- 12.**    Announcements for the meeting of September 21, 2015. (15-3973)

**There were no announcements presented.**

- 13.**    Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (15-3972)

**No items were discussed.**

- 14.**    Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on item(s) of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (15-3974)

**No members of the public addressed the Commission on this item.**

- 15.**    Adjournment for the meeting of September 21, 2015. (15-3975)

**The meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.**